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ABSTRACT

The history of the Swedish universities and their roots in various traditions are traced. Attention is directed to the historico-sociological theory concerning the development and transformation of the Swedish universities from a traditional cultural institution to a rational educational institution. Six themes are covered: a general historical treatment of the economic and political structure of society and educational ideologies and reforms; decision-making organization (i.e., the formal machinery of decision-making); the organization of university studies; cognitive content, described in terms of the cognitive typology derived from Habermas; functions of the universities and their relations to the surrounding community; and the cultivation-education dimension, or aspects of rationalization of the educational transformation. In considering the transformation of the universities from the 12th century to the 1870s, three chronological periods are addressed: the medieval universities, the English and German university traditions from 1500 to 1900, and the Swedish universities from 1477 until the 1870s. Each of these sections is considered in relation to the six themes. Among the areas pertaining to the transformation of the universities from the 1870s to the 1970s are the following: the background to the expansion and transformation of the education system; the nature of the decision-making bodies; changes in the system of degrees and in university teaching; and the organizational development of research and research training in relation to degree studies. (SW)

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CONCLUDED PROJECT

TITLE OF PROJECT

FROM CULTIVATION TO EDUCATION

A STUDY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SWEDISH UNIVERSITIES FROM A TRADITIONAL CULTURAL INSTITUTION TO A RATIONAL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION

CONDUCTED AT

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this historical and sociological study is to describe the history of the Swedish universities and their roots in various traditions.

Another purpose is to analyse the transformation of Sweden's universities during various historical periods and in doing so to regard them as institutional entities in their holistic environment.

Finally, the third purpose of the inquiry is to subject the transformation of the universities to critical scrutiny, so as to evaluate the higher education of today and tomorrow and place it in perspective.

The study has been published in three parts. These are summarized in the following pages.

THEORETICAL APPROACHES

In Part I, which carried the subheading *A discussion of historico-sociological theory concerning the development and transformation of the universities*, were presented the theoretical approaches which then governed the collection of material and the analysis undertaken in the two succeeding, narrative parts. There were discussed the concept of *rationalization* and the process of evolution from a traditional society to a modern, rational society, as this ambiguous concept is described by Max Weber. The idea was to try in this way to capture both the internal processes of the universities and their relations to their surroundings, and furthermore to allow the concept to include both an intentional aspect, concerning intentions, programmes and goals, and a structural aspect concerning actual processes and functions. This concept has been used in describing and analysing programme writings, investigation reports and statutes, as well as the changes undergone by the decision-making organization and the organization of studies and the organizational relationships between the universities and other sectors of the community.

Educational reforms and studies of the education system have been repeatedly criticized for paying very little attention to content and dwelling mainly on forms and organization instead. For this reason, the discussion in Part I was to a great extent concerned with the question of *cognitive theory and cognitive categories* which would be capable of describing and critically appraising changes of content.

In the Frankfurt school, Weber's rationalization concept has been developed mainly by Jürgen Habermas. His ideas powerfully influenced my own theoretical approach, because purposive rationality can describe the quality of activities in various social institutions, the predominant types of knowledge, and the underlying cognitive interests.

Habermas's cognitive categories - the empirical-analytical, the historical-hermeneutic and the critical - have provided the foundation for my classification of the content of university activities and the changes it has passed through. The following three classification criteria have been employed:

- the generation of knowledge, its method and its relation to the cognitive object
- the purpose of the subject when it originated and the manner in which it has hived off from previous subjects or practice

- the function or actual use of the subject.

One important reason for investigating volume and volumetric changes within these categories was that it would in this way become possible to say something concerning the contributions and functions of the universities in relation to the surrounding community.

A *functional theory* of this kind is the third major area discussed in Part I, where I looked for a historico-materialist foundation in order to make a better analysis of actual and latent functions than has been achieved by a frequently normative functionalism. The reproduction concept has played an important part in this functional theory. Moreover, it has provided the starting point for a historical periodization and for a division of society into classes and systems.

THEMES AND ARRANGEMENT

The argument in Parts II and III covers six different themes.

The first of these is a *general historical introduction* dealing with various features of the economic and political structure of society and changes undergone by the same, and also dealing to some extent with educational ideologies and reforms throughout the educational system.

The second theme concerns *decision-making organization*, i e the formal machinery of decision making, with its statutes and bodies, together with their composition. The rationalization (i e bureaucratization) indicators used here comprise the number of decision-making bodies, hierarchic relations, the growth of administrative personnel, the segregation of administration and teaching, and the independence of the administrative system in relation to its sponsor.

The third theme is concerned with the *organization of studies*. This deals with divisions into faculties, sections and departments, subject differentiation and disciplinary segmentation. The rationalization gauges employed here comprise the degree system, merits, viva voce and other forms of examination, the flexibility or inflexibility of teaching routines, attendance control and compulsory activities. This theme also involves observations concerning teacher-student relations and, cursorily, student life and conditions.

The fourth theme, *cognitive content*, is described in terms of the cognitive typology which I have derived from Habermas. A rationalization implies an increase of empirical-analytical sciences in relation to historical-hermeneutic ones. This entails

the calculation of volumetric changes concerning numbers of students, teachers, degrees and resources.

The fifth theme is the *functions* of the universities and their *relations* to the surrounding community. This theme is considered in terms of economic and organizational relations, student recruitment and vocational choices. A description is also included of the economic and organizational conditions on which certain students undergo certain instruction, and what happens to them after their studies. These chapters are discursive summaries which draw on material from the preceding chapters on decision-making and educational organization and on content.

The *cultivation-education* dimension recurs as a sixth theme in various contexts where analytical summaries are undertaken. This is a multidimensional variable aimed at capturing the various aspects of rationalization from a traditional to a modern/rational social institution.

RESULTS AND SUMMARY OF PART II. THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE UNIVERSITIES FROM THE TWELFTH CENTURY TO THE 1870s.

This account is divided into three length chronological sections: the medieval universities, the English and German university traditions from 1500 to 1900, and the Swedish universities from 1477 until the 1870s. Each of these sections is divided into a general historical introduction, the institutional organization of the universities, their organization of studies, their cognitive content, their relations to the community at large and their functions.

The *institutional organization* of the original, medieval universities imitated the associations of craftsmen and merchants in the free boroughs. It was modified by the condensation of ecclesiastical and secular which the universities came to embody. The universities gained ecclesiastical recognition as organizations for study, and secular recognition as independent legal and economic corporations. Students and teachers were attached to them as members. Decisions were made corporately, and the members elected leaders and other officials from among themselves.

The post-Reformation universities inherited the decision-making organization of their medieval precursors. This organization was not seriously challenged until the eighteenth

century. France alone succeeded in completely transforming this organization. This resulted in a reaction against neo-humanism which consolidated the traditional collegiate organization.

At the end of the period one can discern a greater measure of administrative independence within the universities in the form of special appointments and a special career for university administration. At the same time, however, the bureaucratic tendencies which had appeared during theeighteenth century regarding the appointment of teachers had given way to appointments based on scientific criteria at the Swedish universities. The division of universities into faculties had to some extent caused the collegiate unity to disintegrate into separate faculty boards. Outward relations had been radically transformed in the direction of legal and economic subservience.

The corporations of the medieval collegiate universities fought for and secured the right to teach freely, to elect their own new members and to receive instruction without ecclesiastical or secular interference. These rights made up the basic framework of the universities as *study organizations*.

The introduction of special, clearly defined leaving examinations in the eighteenth century marked a fundamental transformation of the organization of studies. During the nineteenth century, moreover, clear entrance qualifications geared to matriculation superseded the vague testimonials required previously. By the end of the period, subject combinations and the entire system of degrees had been established on a firm basis, which considerably circumscribed the range of study options. Subjects had become differentiated, and there were a number of different degrees. The universities had acquired an inward differentiation which better corresponded to the need for grading and classification in a society where the privilege of birth had exhausted its role in the academic labour market and, in formal terms at least, been superseded by qualifications of achievement.

The *content* of the medieval universities was based on a cognitive tradition inherited from the monastic and cathedral schools and from certain town and city schools. Despite the hegemony of theology, studies in this subject became less and less common. Attention was concentrated instead on proficiency subjects such as grammar, writing and rhetoric, on logic and mathematics as auxiliary sciences, and to some extent on the Aristotelean view of external reality. Students took B A or, at best, M A degrees. A very few went on to the higher faculties, in which case they mostly took law, frequently both canon and civil.

Orthodox philosophy and theology together with the emphasis on classical subjects made the universities unresponsive to the new science and its more rational cognitive production, in which conceptual and empirical rationalism were confined. This helps to explain the decline of the universities in the eighteenth century. The emphasis nonetheless put during this century on practical, technical sciences and economic subjects was contradicted once more in the following century by classicism and humanism in the guise of nationalism and idealism.

During the medieval period, the content of university studies was of great practical value in an administrative practice which emphasized the proficiency subjects, law and logic. The remaining educational content was historical-hermeneutic. By the end of the period, medicine and several sciences studied at university had acquired an empirical-analytical content, over and above the traditional historical-hermeneutic content and the somewhat social-scientific character of legal studies. Quantitatively speaking, the historical-hermeneutic subjects were vastly preponderant, but they had now assumed a secularized character. Thus for the Swedish universities, the period as a whole resulted in the abandonment of traditional authority and the adoption of conceptual consistency and empirical proof as guiding principles. On the other hand, the positive interpretation of the surrounding world was not yet altogether accepted.

The Reformation brought about a complete transformation of economic and organizational relations. Government money was placed at the disposal of the universities, and in Sweden there were many instances of the State interfering or trying to interfere with the finance and organization of the universities. A gradual organizational secularization resulted in the establishment of organizational ties between the universities and the State.

Quantitatively speaking, the main *functions* of the medieval universities consisted in training teachers for the growing education system. Next came their contribution to ecclesiastical and secular administration. Law and the proficiency subjects taught by the arts faculties were of great practical importance in everyday administration. Third came theological studies and recruitment for purely ecclesiastical appointments. But the career routes were not very far apart, and the best strategy for assuring oneself of a prosperous future appears to have been that of reading canon law together with elements of civil law after first taking one's M A. In this

way the universities were heavily slanted in favour of vocational education. Their content, on the other hand, was only faintly differentiated, and grading was mostly achieved through a heavy drop-out of students who never graduated.

Most medieval students were clerks not in holy orders, the sons of wealthy farmers and the sons of various categories of townsman. Many other students came from monastic houses, while sons of the nobility were little in evidence. In Sweden, students from the upper reaches of the commonalty and sons of clergy became an important group of university students during the eighteenth century.

Thus the Reformation was followed by a functional differentiation in the sense that other estates became more prominent at the universities, but also in the sense of a change of educational content. Officials for ecclesiastical and secular administration, like the clergy themselves, received a more classical, encyclopaedic education than during the Middle Ages, when law held sway in the superior faculties.

The Swedish universities were constantly under fire in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries for not introducing a more adequate form of vocational education for clergy and public servants. This demand was met to some extent with the introduction of civil degrees in the mid-eighteenth century and the reform of clerical studies in the early years of the nineteenth century. Training for the civil and military administration, however, still remained the most important function of the universities at the close of the period. Next came the training of the clergy, which had now acquired certain educational elements. Third came the teachers, whose studies had also acquired a certain element of vocational education through the introduction of pedagogics as a subject in its own right. With the exception of private teachers, all these categories are to be regarded as civil servants. The proportion of students leaving the universities to enter production increased during the eighteenth century but was still quite small in the nineteenth.

Sweden can be said to have had four different kinds of university during the period under consideration, if we also include the medieval period when, for lack of universities in their own country, Swedish students made their way to the universities in Central Europe.

1) The medieval universities, providing basic instruction in Latin and other proficiency subjects, vocational training for lawyers and theological training.

2) The traditional, "cultivating" university of the period of Swedish greatness.

3) The debilitated traditional universities of the eighteenth century, gradually giving way to a more up-to-date scheme of things.

4) The neo-humanist universities of the nineteenth century.

What remained of the traditional cultural institution by the end of the period was the collegiate internal decision-making organization (except for legal questions), the scientific liberty of teaching according to independent convictions, and a great deal of the classical educational content. On the other hand the universities were now economically and organizationally tied to the State, which moreover provided jobs for most of their graduates.

We have thus been able to establish that the history of the universities does not by any means constitute a linear, evolutionary development from cultivation to education; instead it has fluctuated between these extremes. The universities have been rationalized at a particular time in a particular respect, after which they may have reverted and at the same time been rationalized in some other respect. This has taken place in relation to the changes undergone by the community at large and, above all, by the central government, but it has also resulted from the internal dynamics of science within the relatively independent cultural level.

RESULTS AND SUMMARY OF PART III. THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE UNIVERSITIES FROM THE 1870s TO THE 1970s.

Chapter 1 of Part III describes the outward background to the expansion and transformation of the education system. Data are presented concerning demographic, economic and political changes, and an outline description is also given of changes in the educational forms surrounding universities. The period is divided into three phases: *the turn of the century, the inter-war years and the post-war era*. Some preliminary tendencies for the period are also indicated: scientification, socialization, integration, nationalization and State intervention.

Chapter 2 contains a description of the structure of the decision-making bodies,

the powers they have wielded and the links between them. The development from professional, professorial rule to corporative rule is discussed, as are various aspects of bureaucratization and centralization. It is concluded that the complex organization which the universities have come to constitute incorporates a number of powerful bureaucratic elements. Recent democratic, political and corporative changes, however, have led to a transition from a technocratic-bureaucratic apparatus to a more political one. At the same time, however, this has reinforced the bureaucratic administration in a number of respects.

Chapter 3 deals with changes in the system of degrees and in university teaching. The life and conditions of students are briefly described, and the conclusion is reached that a subject differentiation and a specialization have taken place which are reflected by the system of degrees. Demands have been refined and bureaucratized. In many respects, teaching has assumed more ordinary schooling forms. Rules of admission and eligibility have been formally relaxed and differentiated. Teaching nowadays is characterized by greater distance and more impersonal relations between students and teachers.

Chapter 4 is a very brief outline of the organizational development of research and research training in relation to degree studies.

Chapter 5 introduces the categories of historical-hermeneutic and empirical-analytical knowledge, together with three criteria on which the assessment of the disciplines is based. This chapter includes a short outline of the history of ideas, followed by more detailed accounts of the development of the various faculties. The main content of teaching at the theological faculties is classified as historical-hermeneutic but with elements of social science. The legal faculties are termed hermeneutic social sciences with an important, manifest social usefulness and a latent ideological usefulness. The medical faculties are classified as empirical and analytical. The subjects of the arts faculties are more disparate, which precludes a collective designation. The social sciences are discussed in particularly great detail.

Next comes a brief consideration of economic priorities at the various faculties. One observes a massive preponderance of scientific, technical and medical subjects. One conclusion is that there are three tendencies here which more than anything else have transformed educational content during the period under consideration. These are the specialization of the technical and medical subjects, the growth of the social sciences and the focus of the humanities on positivism.

During the period under consideration, the proportions of students attracted by various faculties and subjects changed roughly as follows. The professional, legal and medical courses of studies increased their shares during the first half of the period. The theological profession, on the other hand, declined very steeply throughout the period, especially in the 1880s, 1950s and 1960s. The mathematical-scientific section and the technical universities grew rapidly from the turn of the century to the outbreak of the First World War. The mathematical section lost ground during the inter-war years. The enormous growth of the social sciences during the post-war era has reduced the shares of other faculties, especially law, medicine and theology. The empirical-analytical faculties and subjects have grown from roughly one-third of the students to somewhere between half and two-thirds. Since the social sciences have accounted for most of this increase, importance has been attached to discussing their contributions and cognitive interests. If they are classed as historical-hermeneutic, the empirical-analytical subjects accounted for about 70 per cent of the entire volume of university teaching in 1975. If on the other hand the social sciences are classed as empirical-analytical, this category rises to almost 90 per cent. At the same time the more specifically experimental subjects made up about 36 per cent of the whole. We may therefore conclude that a shift has occurred in favour of empirical-analytical content.

Chapter 6 describes the recruitment of university students by age, sex and social class. The conclusion here is that educational choices are to a great extent sex-bound. The age structure has changed during the past fifteen years in favour of a higher average age, especially at the arts faculties. Children of graduates, elementary school teachers, officers, senior salaried employees and executives have been over-represented, while working class children have been heavily under-represented. In this respect a very slow equalization has taken place, mostly during the 1960s.

Choices of occupation and field of activity changed during the period in such a way that the biggest fields to begin with were civil administration, the Church and military administration. The teaching sector expanded heavily at the beginning of the century and especially during the 1960s, with the three biggest occupational sectors now being teaching, medical and health services and public administration.

Chapter 6 ends with a discussion of the changes undergone by the economic and organizational relations of the university during the period under consideration. It is observed that in a sense the universities today are less influenced by market mechanisms and economic rules. This chapter also includes a discussion of the way in which various processes, such as assortment, social control, specialization and professionalization, have helped to establish such functions as labour reproduction, stratification and benefit and application areas. One conclusion is that the universities discharge important ideological functions but that they do so by subjecting themselves to technical and economic purposive rationality.

The emancipatory role of universities, arts and science can only be achieved and developed if research and teaching are based on politico-ethical values. Hermeneutic subjects with their ideological usefulness must participate here in order to create a more general knowledge capable of bridging the gulf between humanist and technical-scientific culture.

Lennart Svensson

1980-11-15

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